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CONFUSED WATER BEETLES (COLEOPTERA: DYTISCIDAE)

On October 18, 1958, I was engaged in that onerous chore of painting storm window frames. The windows were placed horizontally on saw-horses, about 3 feet off the ground, under the open sky, but in the shade of a tall tree. The day was bright and clear with a moderate southeast breeze. The temperature was around 70° F.

About 2 o'clock I began to be annoyed by beetles landing on the glass with a distinct "plink" and skidding into the paint. I absentmindedly lifted the first few out of the sticky paint and tossed them away. Suddenly I realized that most of them were a single species of small predaceous diving beetle.

It is well known that most dytiscids have the hind legs highly modified for swimming, and are "awkward in locomotion on land," according to Balduf (1935, Bionomics of Entomophagous Coleoptera, p. 30). Thus when they hit the glass they would skid into the paint. It would seem that these beetles were mistaking the horizontal window pane for water. Essig (1942, College Entomology, p. 538) notes that dytiscids are "attracted to bright tin roofs and automobiles." Between 2 and 4 P.M. fifteen specimens of *Laccophilus fasciatus* Aubé were collected from the storm window glass. Only two terrestrial beetles landed on the window during this time; one specimen each of *Meibomeus musculus* (Say) (Bruchidae) and *Tritoma humeralis* Fab. (Erotylidae).

The dytiscids were coming in from the southeast with the prevailing breeze. Probably they were migrating, as Balduf (*op. cit.,* p. 31) says they migrate "mostly by day in spring and autumn, and at night in summer." The nearest large body of water is almost 2 miles to the southeast, but there are smaller ponds nearer in other directions.

The use of glass as a method of collecting dytiscids is not being recommended, but the incident seems to show that at least one species may confuse glass with water under certain conditions. Also, it may indicate that these beetles find new water areas by sight and not by the use of some other sense.

Appreciation is expressed to P. J. Spangler for confirming the identification of the dytiscids, and to J. M. Kingsolver for determining the other two beetles.—GARLAND T. RIEGEL, *Dept. of Zoology, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Ill.*

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A more cautious taxonomist would have talked of similarity rather than relationship. Taxonomists . . . too often say "related" when they should say "similar to." —Darlington, 1957, Zoogeography, p. 27.